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AUTHOR DiNino, Alex J.
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ABSTRACT

The administrative team is made up of all personnel in the school environment who are directly involved in the instructional process. The principal serves as the team leader responsible for the supervision of instruction in the school and the development of a staff organization which best implements the educational program. Recognizing that modern secondary school "administration" emphasizes decentralization by a horizontal delegation of authority, responsibility, and decisionmaking instead of the traditional vertical method, the team utilizes a systems analysis tool to effect solutions to problems. By use of this tool, the administrative team insures itself of systematic and objective solutions to all management problems. Some characteristics of an administrative team are described. (Author)

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BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

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by

Alex J. DiNino
Principal, Walter E. Stebbins High School
Dayton, Ohio

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At a time of rapid, broad and deep social change, the public school principal faces new challenges. Teachers, students, parents--the general public--as well as principals themselves, need a clearer role definition of the modern principalship and all that the word implies.

From whence came the concept of the principal and what forces have determined his scope of responsibilities? The position of principal stems from his original role as a teacher. Early American schools, typically, had one teacher and a single room in which instruction was carried on. In retrospect, this really was the introduction of team teaching to the American scene inasmuch as most one-room teachers had several student "assistants" to help carry out the responsibilities of the "learning time." As school buildings expanded, so did the size of staff, administrative personnel and coordination responsibilities. A new title crept into educational jargon--the "principal-teacher"--a sometime and often additional part-time responsibility assigned to the school's most able teacher. Today, we find that the chief building administrator still evolves from the classroom, but his responsibilities have been greatly expanded.

Although the early "principal-teacher's" responsibilities were varied, they were of necessity extremely limited. Today's chief school administrator has the responsibility and authority for the school's educational program, extra-curricular activities, supplemental instructional services, pupil personnel, supportive services, the physical plant,

custodial personnel, visitors, and public relations. As if this isn't enough, he is generally required to be well versed in legal aspects governing the operation of the school, acquainted with and often engaged in negotiations between the board of education and employee groups with the added injunctive of enforcing certain contractual provisions of memoranda of understanding. While the secondary principal is no longer the "principal-teacher" (although he still exists in many parts of the country), he is still obligated with and responsible for improving the instructional competency of his staff.

Added to these multiple and diverse obligations, our modern master of educational diversity must also establish and nurture a cooperative and stimulating learning environment within his school, interpret its needs to the central administration, school board and public, and serve as a public relations ambassador. It is no wonder that he finds himself the most sought after school official by parents seeking to satisfy concerns.

Obviously the "what" of today's principalship remains fairly constant with that of fifty years ago even though the responsibilities have been manifestly broadened, have become more difficult to carry out, and are exposed to greater pressure. Nor has the nature of his duties undergone significant alteration. The principal is still charged with and involved in directing the resources and energies of his school's operation toward the achievement of the district's educational goals.

Our forefathers and the labor unions who first demanded the establishment of the public school concept believed the "why" of an education was to prepare children for successful adulthood. This, too, has not radically changed

over the generations. The significant difference between yesterday's "principal-teacher" and today's secondary principal is the "how," the way he acts, reacts, and interacts amid the growing pressures of modern society. In short, today's principal is probably doing the same things his predecessors did plus many more and doing them in a different manner.

Two important tasks of school administration seem apparent: (1) providing for the supervision of instruction, and (2) developing a staff organization which implements the educational program. Modern administration of the secondary school emphasizes decentralization by delegating authority, responsibility, and decision-making either horizontally--thereby emphasizing the role of staff--or vertically with the decision-making process directed downward. The former combines specialists with specialities; the latter combines decision-making with problems to be solved, decisions to be reached, and activities to be performed--administration's real-life needs. The problem is to develop an organization which meets both of these goals. Even as early as 1955, Hall discovered the value of a more flexible organization by reporting a positive relationship between quality of educational program and the diffusion of administrative procedures.[1] Hilding further found that "the organizational environment had tangible effects on the practices of the school and refuted the contention that personnel with the right attitudes would work effectively regardless of the nature of the organization."[2]

No longer is the "best" principal typified as the bureaucratic authoritative figure of past generations dreaming up endless rules of behavior and forcefully over-reacting to slight deviations by students, teachers or parents.

In studying staff relationships in public schools, Gross and Herriot reasoned that "a principal who stresses distinction of formal status emphasizes the fact that he is superior to his teachers, and that they would see him as a representative of the school bureaucracy."[3] A significantly different process is used by today's successful administrator. He seeks to turn people on, not off. He is concerned with helping people, not destroying them. He is accorded the responsibilities of leadership; he does not usurp them. He is the chief catalytic change agent for bringing about educational improvement, and he does this by diverting his staff energies into constructive channels. Gross and Harriott touched on this principle when they wrote: "His (the principal's) attitude would magnify the importance of the educational task performed by his teachers, and he would strive to maximize their unique skills and to develop a colleague relationship among them based on their common concern for the pupils."[4]

How does the contemporary principal go about doing all this? One possible answer lies in the development and maintenance of an administrative team, the subject of this panel.

Let's face it. The job of today's principal has outgrown itself. No longer can one man continue to perform the tasks assigned him nor make the myriad decisions that arise daily. The principal doesn't need more assistants or associates; he needs an administrative team--a team with philosophical and educational decision-making concepts similar to the policies he is charged with implementing.

So, what is an administrative team? Typically, it may consist of the principal, assistant or associate principals, guidance staff, department chairmen and advisory council members. Optimumly, the administrative team would consist of all these plus the whole of the instructional staff.

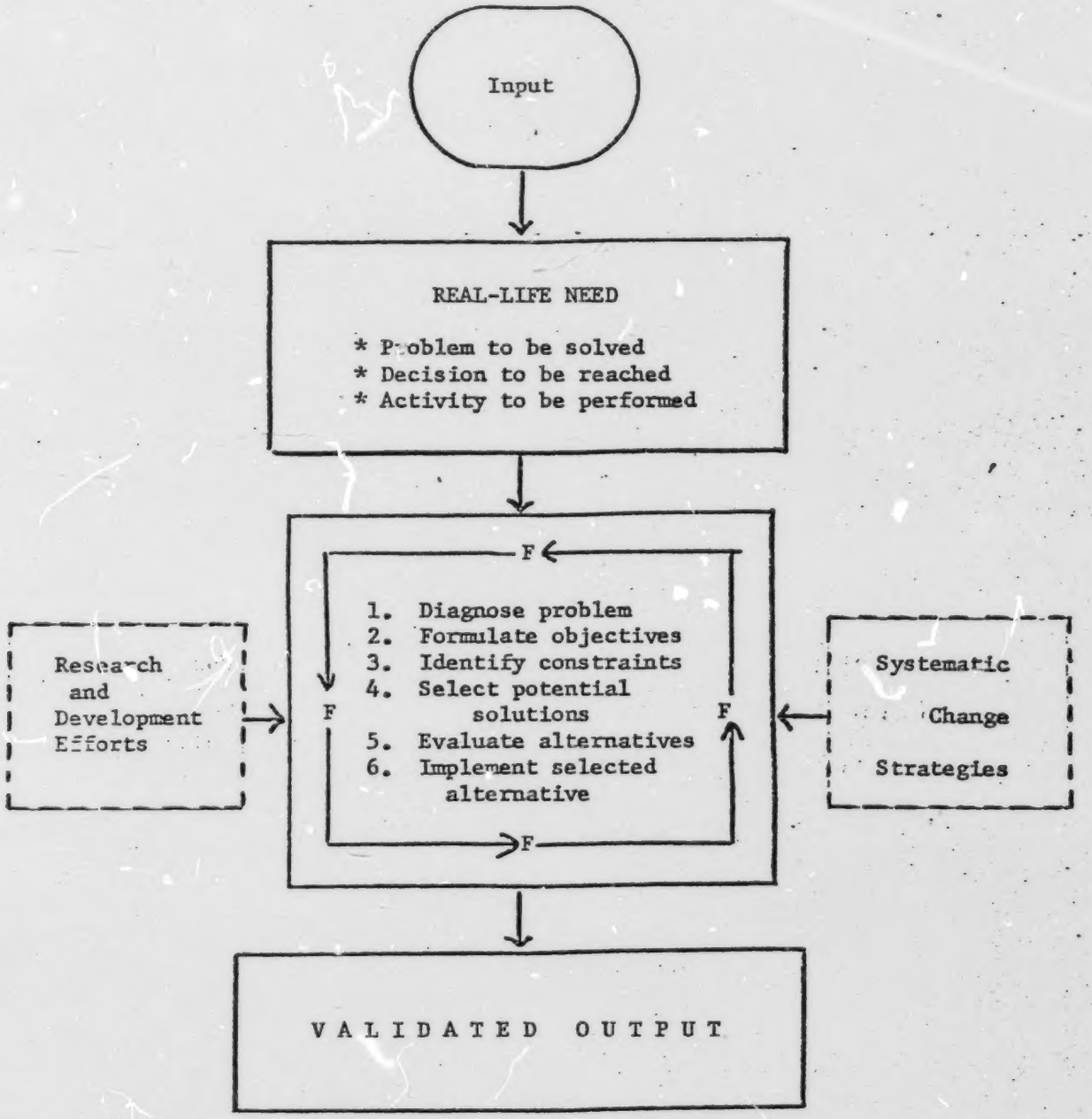

Figure 2. Instrument Used by Administrative Team For Effecting Instructional Progress

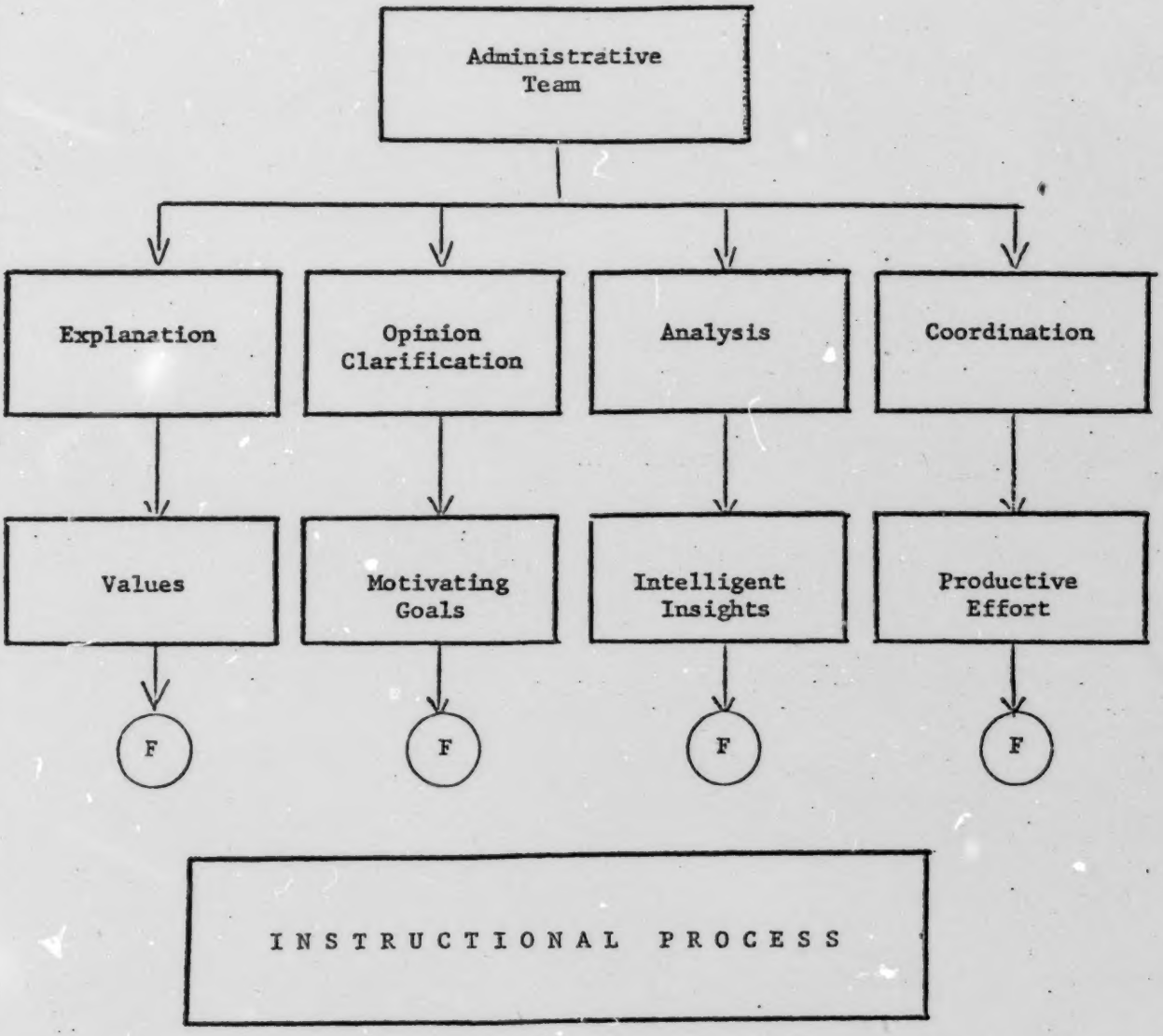

Figure 1. Evolutionary Functions of the Administrative Team

It seems to me that implementation of the administrative team concept in our secondary schools should receive high priority. Not only does it have the potential for alleviating many frustrations of a staff of diverse and inter-affective personnel, but it has the built-in capability of enhancing communication, decision-making and supervision within the school.

It is our belief that the team concept involves not only the schools' "administrators" but the entire school staff. It is based on the belief that an administration which assumes that individuals perform best and are most satisfied when they are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process is a truly effective instructional-administrative model. Research indicates that when a staff is involved in planning policy and curriculum change, its members are more apt to implement programs effectively and make them work.[5] The team approach recognizes this research conclusion. Decisions and rules are not imposed from above but arise from staff deliberations.

Additionally, instead of the principal making decisions and delegating specific tasks to individuals, team members share responsibility for decision-making and for carrying out those decisions. Each member of the team knows what others are doing, and each team member is involved in all administrative areas.

To function as a team, it is important that concrete understandings and mechanisms for action be established to insure feedback and viable implementation. To this end, we have prepared graphic analogues which delineate the evolutionary functions of the administrative team and the systems analysis instrument used to solve administrative real-life needs.

Teams develop their own operational concepts. Those illustrated have been ours. But in any case, concepts must reflect the team's own interests, talents and concerns. Areas of responsibility must be mutually agreed upon with detailed divisions of work equally distributed among all team members. It is important that no one individual be locked into a narrow task area nor constrained by superficial status labels. The more attractive areas of responsibility and activity, e.g. curriculum and instruction, should be made available to all team members without exception.

As with all interpersonal interaction, communication is absolutely necessary to the effective operation of an administrative team. Weekly rap sessions provide one vehicle whereby ideas are shared, problems examined, co-associates become informed, decisions are pursued, action plans established, and activities become coordinated. It is axiomatic that team communication permeate the entire school. The team cannot effectively serve its mission in isolation.

A word of caution--the administrative team concept demands openness and honesty among all its members. The concept can work only when the principal (team leader) and each member of the team have complete confidence in each other, trust each other's opinions, and actively share in the decision-making process. If the principal per se is unwilling to share his status, power, or self-appointed role with other members of the team, any attempt at implementation is foredoomed to failure. Iannone supports this contention by reporting that "principals as a group are high achievement oriented. They seem to have two dominant needs: achievement and recognition for achievement. . . . they seem to receive satisfaction from both achievements on the job and the recognition they receive for these achieve-

ments."[6] Our administrative team concept is at variance with this finding, for the team's impact can result only from the unique contributions made by each team member. In this frame of reference, achievement and recognition result from group effort, not from administrative directive.

The team, as a viable, cohesive leadership unit, undertakes the achievement of those goals its members establish for itself on the basis of common concern. Genuinely effective leadership not only contributes to the realization of such goals but also serves in the formulation and clarification of goal objectives.

In the evolution of educational leadership, two distinct types of team leaders emerge. One, the status leader, is a person whose official responsibilities grow out of the nature of this position. Principals are <u>status leaders</u> typical of the traditional structure of our schools. The other and more effective type is the <u>contributing leader</u>, one concerned with the solution of problems which often cut across the lines established by a higher level administrative structure. The administrative team leader role might well be classified as a contributing leader (the principal)--one who is a part of, concerned with, and involved in the solutions of school-wide as well as district-wide problems. This role assumes, of course, that the district does in fact, practice top-echelon team management.

Several characteristics of the administrative team concept are readily apparent and bear brief discussion:

1. This concept places greater value on coordination than on conformity. This implies the right of each member of a team to be himself and make his own unique contribution to the team effort. Conformity is an instrument of authoritarianism and has no place in the team concept.

2. The team reflects the successes of each member of the team. The team leader is stimulated by the achievements of his team associates and recognizes their individual and collective successes.
3. The team concept employs the same sort of techniques in human relations that it seeks to develop in others. Democracy is not a philosophy that can be transmitted through verbal means. It is best understood when it is demonstrated and recognized. "Human" and "objectivity" are descriptors frequently mentioned in the profile of an effective team leader. It is interesting to note, however, that when reviewing the critical requirements for effective principalship, Cooper found that "in the area of personal characteristics and professional standards, the principal was reported to be ineffective in 65.01 percent of the behaviors observed and reported!"[7]
4. The team relates itself to goals. By its very definition, team functioning implies action or progress toward mutually agreed upon objectives. The formation, clarification and evaluation of goals is one of the team's prime purposes.
5. The team is considered a means and not an end. Emphasis is placed on the collective welfare of the group as well as the individual, always seeking a balance between the two. Only in a totalitarian framework does leadership become an end in itself. Team leadership--as a cohesive group unit--avoids this pitfall.
6. The administrative team depends upon the motives and competencies of those who serve in leadership roles. And while the processes

of group interaction depend upon the technical and human skills of each member of the team and the team leader in particular, they also depend upon the values which motivate each member of the team.

7. The team approach provides for the processes by which the participation of all members may be insured. This means that the team, by nature, provides the machinery for coordinating the many team members' contributions into a meaningful, unified and productive effort.

8. This concept recognizes its inability to always find perfect agreement within itself, so it continually seeks for common denominators of human communication and action. The team approach provides the platform on which common grounds of experience may be discovered, wherein communication may be achieved and understanding improved. Moreover, the team technique creates an atmosphere in which no stigma is attached to honest differences of opinion.

9. The administrative team leader regards co-associates as decision-making equals rather than subordinates or mere followers. Emphasis is placed on cooperative effort instead of command-execution type directives. A team effort implies an understanding of the job to be done and provides an opportunity for each to make his own unique contribution for carrying out real-life instructional needs.

10. The team approach places priority on development rather than on dictation. Dictatorship implies blind obedience. Development involves thoughtful and deliberate approaches to those real-life instructional needs.

If the principal, as the team leader, is to influence positively the quality and improvement of his educational program, it might be wise to examine briefly the leadership qualities required to achieve these objectives. Three of importance come to mind.

I. Professional perspective: This is a vital element of productive leadership, for it serves to illuminate. The team leader is charged with looking beyond the status quo to the potential future of every aspect of education. Many real advances in education have evolved from an exploration of the future by administrators who maintained this viable perspective. Don't be misled, however; true perspective includes more than the "what might be"; it also requires a critical survey of what has transpired in the past and what actually exists in the present. This is the real function of an action research component in the instrumentation of the concept. It is suggested that the professional perspective of the team leader be directed toward three obvious goals:

   a. The identification and continuous evaluation of performance objectives. Each participating team member must have a clear concept of the purposes to which the school is directing its energies, how it intends to get there, and what measurement instruments are to be used to guarantee success.

   b. A critical survey of resources. Since the resources of a school are chiefly facilities and people, the team provides input to the team leader regarding its recources.

   c. Finally, a third goal for the team leader is to keep himself posted on that most recent findings of research. Research

outcomes can be extremely helpful to the team leader and his co-associates; e.g., the most recent findings of how adolescents develop suggest ways of improving the school's curriculum structure. Much research has been done in identifying the psychological bases for learning--bases which have influenced the elimination of wasteful learning experiences so often the hallmark of yesterday's secondary educational program. Moreover, research continually investigates the comparative effectiveness of various teaching methods and utility of instructional materials. The administrative team approach provides a most constructive and effective vehicle for disseminating these findings to a school's staff.

II. Coordination is the second most important quality of team leadership. Administration is certainly not an end in itself. Its only justification lies in its contribution to the effectiveness of learning and instruction. And since unity is essential to an effective educational program, a criterion for judging administration would be the extent to which it is able to integrate the individual activities of its staff members into a meaningful and efficient pattern of operation. The team concept provides its leader with the means whereby all activities can be coordinated into a meaningful whole, whether they be the efficient sharing of facilities, synthesizing theory into practical expediencies, or the merging of conflicting goals into cooperative function.

III. Motivation is a third and perhaps elusive quality of team leadership. The impetus and power of any team enterprise lies in the motivation

generated for the target effort. It is possible that all the essential elements for a good educational climate might be present without producing desired results. Only when all team members want to get the job done effectively does the effort move ahead. Motivation comes from the hope of success--it is diminished by the feeling of failure or inadequacy. The wise team leader seeks to demonstrate the type of leadership that (1) creates an atmosphere in which success is recognized by each team member, and (2) gives each team member recognition where recognition is due.

SUMMARY

In summary, the administrative team is made up of all personnel in the school environment who are directly involved in the instructional process. The principal serves as the team leaeer responsible for the supervision of instruction in the school and the development of a staff organization which best implements the educational program. Recognizing that modern secondary school "administration" emphasizes decentralization by horizontally delegating authority, responsibility, and decision-making instead of vertically as has been historically shown, the team utilizes a systems analysis tool to effect solutions to problems, reach decisions, and perform activities--all basic real-life instructional needs. By the use of this tool, the administrative team insures itself of systematic and objective solutions to all management problems.

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